United Nations A/ES-10/797–S/2018/883

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 October 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 1 October 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you once again as unarmed, defenceless Palestinian civilian protesters participating in the Great March of Return continue to be brutally killed by Israeli occupation forces for daring to raise their voices to protest the systematic violation of their human rights, to demand an end to Israeli occupation and siege and to call for freedom and return to their ancestral lands.

Friday, 28 September 2018, was the single bloodiest day of the Great March of Return protests since 14 May, the day on which Israeli occupying forces fatally injured more than 60 Palestinians. In this latest onslaught, the occupying forces killed seven Palestinian civilians. Among those killed were two young Palestinian boys, Nasir Azmi Musbeh, aged 12, and Mohammed Naif al-Houm, aged 14, as well as Mohammed Ali Mohammed Inshasi, aged 18, Iyad Khalil Ahmad al-Shaer, aged 18, Mohammed Bassam Mohammed Shakhsa, aged 24, Mohammed Ashraf al-Awawdeh, aged 25, and Mohammed Walid Haniyeh, aged 32. Moreover, on 24 September, yet another protester, Muhammad Fayiz Abu al-Sadiq, aged 21, was killed by Israeli occupying forces. Hundreds of other civilians have also been injured as a result of the live fire and other ammunition routinely unleashed by the occupying forces against the civilian population.

Israel's savage brutality against peaceful protesters on Friday, equivalent, in every meaning of the word, to terrorism, and carried out in full view of the international community, is characteristic of its actions throughout the Great March of Return, during which occupying forces have killed at least 198 Palestinians, including 31 children, 3 persons with disabilities, 3 paramedics and 2 journalists, and injured more than 20,000 people, many of them with life-changing and paralyzing injuries resulting from an illegal type of explosive ammunition that is designed to shatter bones.

None of the protesters, journalists or medics killed during the Great March of Return was armed or posed a lethal threat to Israeli soldiers. In a statement to the Human Rights Council, Human Rights Watch confirmed that it "has not documented instances where protesters posed an imminent threat to life". The killing of these

Please recycle

civilians is cold-blooded murder and cannot be justified by any means. Humanitarian and human rights law are patently clear. Where is the moral outrage or the condemnation of such ongoing horrendous crimes? Why does moral outrage become selective when it comes to the lives of Palestinians?

That an occupying Power should feel immune from scrutiny in a situation where it is killing innocent civilians, children, women and men, violating the most basic principles of international law and human morality, and causing extensive human suffering and devastation, undoubtedly leads to ever-growing cynicism, particularly among the Palestinian people, who have been deprived from the protections of the rule of law and subjected to a glaring double standard for decades.

That an illegal occupation, which can only subsist through the breach of humanitarian and human rights law, should last for more than 51 years, with no concrete action to precipitate its end, undoubtedly risks destroying the credibility of the international system and of the whole edifice of international law, which the world has gone through wars and colossal human and material sacrifices to build, assert and defend.

What we demand — an end to this occupation and historical injustice — is no more than a call on the international community to respect and defend the universal principles and moral standards that it has itself developed and accepted as basic canons, all of which are in grave jeopardy at this critical moment.

And, while families mourn their dead, the medical structures in Gaza can barely function under the weight of the shocking number of injuries, compounded by more than a decade of Israel's illegally imposed blockade and restrictions on patients from leaving Gaza to receive life-saving medical treatment not available there. Hospitals are overwhelmed, reliant on only four hours of electricity a day and faced with fuel shortages, critically low levels of medical supplies, exhausted medics and nurses and a lack of specialist surgeons and doctors to carry out emergency limb reconstructive surgical interventions for the wounded.

At the same time, the socioeconomic situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate on a daily basis. On 25 September, the World Bank described Gaza's economy as being "in free fall" as a result of "a decade-long blockade and a recent drying-up of liquidity, with aid flows no longer enough to stimulate growth", leading to "an alarming situation with every second person living in poverty and the unemployment rate for its overwhelmingly young population at over 70 per cent." According to the World Bank Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza, "the economic and social situation in Gaza has been declining for over a decade, but has deteriorated exponentially in recent months and has reached a critical point. Increased frustration is feeding into the increased tensions, which have already started spilling over into unrest and setting back the human development of the region's large youth population."

The persistence of this situation for more than 11 years — of a mostly refugee civilian population held captive in one of the most densely populated strips of land on Earth, stripped of their basic rights and subjected to repeated massacres — will be remembered as one of the darkest chapters in history.

The plight of the Palestinian people as a whole remains a shameful injustice that must be brought to an end. For more than 70 years and 51 years respectively, they have been enduring two layers of brutal oppression: their dispossession since the Nakba in 1948 and the illegal foreign occupation of their land, which has forced a once-thriving society to live under decades of violent oppression, domination and control by Israel.

The continuation of this Nakba is illustrated most starkly in the case of the Palestinian Bedouin community in Khan Al Ahmar, east of Jerusalem, which has received yet another an ultimatum by the Israeli occupying forces to leave its lands and homes or else face the demolition of its village and forcible transfer of its

inhabitants. As stated by Amnesty International, "This act is not only heartless and discriminatory; it is illegal. The forcible transfer of the Khan Al Ahmar community amounts to a war crime. Israel must end its policy of destroying Palestinians' homes and livelihoods to make way for settlements." This unlawful act would also totally destroy the territorial contiguity of the occupied West Bank and the physical possibility of the two-State solution, proving yet again that this act constitutes part and parcel of Israel's illegal colonization campaign of our land.

The international community must not remain silent in the face of these blatant crimes being committed by Israel's brutal occupation machine and must ensure accountability and justice for the Palestinian people.

It is shocking that, despite Israel's occupation constituting one of the most well-documented situations in the world, with scores of eminent United Nations experts, lawyers and scholars alleging and proving that international crimes have been committed, no Israeli politician, military personnel or settler responsible for such crimes has ever been brought to justice. While domestic Israeli investigations are wholly inadequate, with Israeli courts serving solely the interests of the occupier and rubber-stamping Israeli crimes, the International Criminal Court is a viable independent judicial body capable of ending impunity for crimes committed against the Palestinian people, and we call upon all States to fully support its work.

In the light of Israel's ongoing, premeditated killing and maiming of unarmed protesters in Gaza and its imminent destruction of the village of Khan Al Ahmar, we again call on the international community to uphold its obligation to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population.

Moreover, we shall continue to insist that the broader historical context be addressed. The international community must finally make Israel acknowledge that injustice and oppression are the cause of the cycles of crisis and conflict, and that only an end to its occupation and illegal policies can ensure peace and security, not only for Palestinians and Israelis, but also for the entire region. We thus appeal again to the international community, including the Security Council, to act, with responsibility and conscience, to bring an end to Israel's illegal occupation and to all of its crimes against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population and their land so that this cruel and tragic chapter of conflict and occupation can end and a chapter of peace, security and freedom can finally be opened.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 647 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 19 September 2018 (A/ES-10/795–S/2018/858), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations